
Environmental Advisory Council
Wednesday, May 27, 2009

The regular meeting of the Environmental Advisory Council was held on the above date for the transaction of general business.

Present – J. Drayer, A. Molteni – 2.

Also present – S. Katzenmoyer, A. Miller

CALL TO ORDER

Janet Drayer called the meeting to order at 6:10 pm

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by A. Molteni, seconded by J. Drayer, to approve the April 28, 2009 minutes as written. Motion carried unanimously.

LIGHT POLLUTION

Ms. Katzenmoyer introduced Andrew Miller to the Council members. Mr. Miller gave a brief background of the Planning and Zoning updates. He stated that the City has hired a consultant to assist with amending these ordinances. He stated his hope that the new ordinances will place restrictions wherever legally possible. The issue of lighting has not yet been specifically addressed but Mr. Miller hopes that the standards set forth by the Dark Sky Association will be adopted.

Ms. Drayer stated her belief that crime issues will always play a part in Reading's quest to address light pollution. She recommended that sodium lighting be used whenever possible.

Ms. Drayer questioned the stance of the Planning Commission on lighting issues. Mr. Miller stated that they have had success with voluntary compliance by those submitting plans.

Ms. Drayer questioned the roll of the Berks County Conservation District in the planning process. Mr. Miller noted that they deal with soil grading and erosion issues.

Ms. Drayer stated that she has been attending Planning Commission meetings as she is able. She noted her delight with the environmental issues being addressed at the Double Tree Hotel project. Mr. Miller stated that new State regulations are requiring new construction to be more environmentally friendly.

Mr. Molteni stated that the public needs to be better educated on environmental issues that they can control daily. Mr. Miller agreed and stated that environmental issues can also be economic issues with money savings realized.

Mr. Miller explained that the Berks County Planning Commission makes environmental recommendations on Reading plans. He stated that Reading is limited on what they can require due to State and Federal regulations.

Ms. Katzenmoyer reviewed the Exeter Lighting Ordinance. She noted that Section 6 Lighting Criteria, letter H Signs and Billboards, number 8 "Rotating, flashing, pulsing, "marching" or oscillating light sources, lasers, beacons, or strobe lighting shall not be permitted" addresses electronic billboards and questioned if this statement could be added to the Reading ordinances. Mr. Miller stated his belief that this statement should preclude electronic billboards. He requested Ms. Katzenmoyer check with Exeter to see if this statement has been challenged in court.

Mr. Miller stated his belief that the electronic billboard on Lancaster Ave and the one at 3rd and Washington Sts are prohibited by the Zoning Ordinance. He stated his belief that additional legislation is not needed but better enforcement is.

Ms. Drayer questioned who enforces these issues. Mr. Miller stated that the Planning Commission issued a Resolution concerning the billboard at 3rd & Washington Sts but there was no follow up from the legal department. He has recently discovered that the billboard on Lancaster Ave was erroneously permitted. He noted his frustrations at these and other planning and zoning issues throughout the City.

Ms. Drayer questioned if adding this clause would create a grandfather issue. Mr. Miller stated that many times after legislation is passed, items are erected and the City finds itself challenging for removal and not getting compliance.

Ms. Drayer questioned what the EAC could do to improve the situation. Mr. Miller stated that there is no easy solution. He suggested that the public continue to express their concerns and outrage to City officials. He stated that the City deserves better and must begin to think that way. He stated the difficulty in changing this mindset as Countians always remind the City that they must do everything they can to attract new business.

Ms. Drayer stated that she will be compiling a petition to present to Council regarding lighting issues.

BERNHARTS

The Council reviewed the Risk Assessment prepared by Gradient Corporation.

Ms. Katzenmoyer explained that Council members should make comments to her no later than June 6 to enter them into the public comment. She stressed the need for scientific data to support the Council's remediation recommendations.

The Council analyzed the data with Mr. Molteni. He stated that he will do some further research on the type of contamination and will give comments and recommendations.

The next meeting of the Environmental Advisory Council will be held on Tuesday, June 23 at 6 pm in the City Council office.

The meeting of the Environmental Advisory Council was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by
Shelly Katzenmoyer, Deputy City Clerk*